



441 G St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

November 19, 2020

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

Global Food Security: Information on Spending and Types of Assistance Provided by the United States and Other Donors

Dear Mr. Fortenberry:

In 2020, the United Nations (UN) reported that nearly 690 million people in the world were undernourished.¹ According to this reporting, the number of undernourished people has increased by 60 million since 2014. Stunting—a condition where children are too short for their age due to poor nutrition in-utero and in early childhood—affected more than 140 million children under the age of 5 around the world in 2019.² The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is expected to worsen food insecurity levels around the world. In April 2020, the International Food Policy Research Institute estimated that, absent interventions, more than 140 million additional people around the world could fall into extreme poverty in 2020, which would exacerbate global food insecurity. UN projections indicate that 83 million to 132 million people could become undernourished in 2020 as a result of the pandemic. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has reported that COVID-19’s effects on emerging economies could increase emergency food assistance needs by 25 percent.

You asked us to describe global food security assistance from the United States and other countries and organizations. This report examines the amount and types of food security assistance that the United States and other donors have provided globally from 2014 through 2018.³

¹Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Food Program (WFP), and World Health Organization (WHO), *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World: Transforming Food Systems for Affordable Healthy Diets* (Rome: 2020). This report uses the prevalence of undernourishment metric, which is an estimate of the proportion of the population that lacks enough dietary energy for a healthy, active life.

²UNICEF, WHO, and World Bank Group, *Levels and Trends in Child Malnutrition* (Washington, D.C.: March 2020).

³At the time of our analysis, calendar year 2018 was the latest year for which data were available. Additionally, at the time of this review, GAO was examining U.S. efforts to assess the progress of Feed the Future—the U.S. government’s interagency effort to coordinate nonemergency food security assistance—toward sustainably reducing poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.

To estimate the amount and kinds of food security assistance provided by the United States and other donors, we analyzed data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) for calendar years 2014 through 2018.⁴ Specifically, we analyzed gross disbursements of official development assistance reported by OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) nations, non-OECD DAC nations that report voluntarily, and multilateral organizations.⁵ To determine which disbursements are part of food security assistance, we used a methodology developed by the Group of Seven (G7) Food Security Working Group that is based on OECD CRS codes that identify the primary purposes of the assistance that donors report.⁶ We did not independently assess the underlying data from each donor, but determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of describing the largest donors, recipient nations, and types of assistance provided for certain sectors, including those the G7 had determined were central to food security.

To describe modes of delivery—in-kind food transfers and cash-based assistance—for U.S. global food assistance, we relied on U.S. obligation data, which are reported by fiscal year. We compiled and analyzed data provided by USAID and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), as well as data available in public reports, for fiscal years 2014 through 2019. We compared this information to data available in Foreign Aid Explorer, the U.S. government’s database on U.S. foreign aid. We also reviewed information provided by USAID and USDA regarding their collection and validation of obligation and modality data. For programs that provide in-kind assistance, we aggregated reported obligation data for their awards to calculate in-kind obligations. To identify cash-based modalities, we aggregated information that USAID reported for awards and by modality in its reports to Congress for Emergency Food Security Program funding, and data USAID provided for 202(e) funding.⁷ We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for estimating obligations and modalities of assistance for U.S. food security programs authorized by the U.S. Food for Peace Act and for the Emergency Food

⁴The OECD DAC is an intergovernmental forum that consists of 30 member nations. According to the OECD DAC mandate, this forum aims to promote development cooperation and other relevant policies to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The OECD DAC collects and analyzes data and information on official development assistance and other types of assistance.

⁵Disbursements are amounts paid by governments during the year to liquidate government obligations. We report gross disbursements or disbursement outflows for official development assistance grants and loans. Data do not include receipts of funds by donors, which can happen when recipient countries repay loans or return unused grant funds. The disbursements we report for multilateral donors do not include disbursements from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Disbursements from IFAD were not disaggregated in a way that we could identify specific funding to food security sectors.

⁶These codes are called “purpose codes,” and they identify the sector of destination for disbursements in OECD’s system. The G7 identified a set of purpose codes as constituting food security assistance. We included the purpose codes that the G7 identified as directly supporting food security as well as food security codes that were added to OECD’s system after the G7 methodology was developed. For the purposes of reporting global food security disbursements, we did not include purpose codes that the G7 identified as indirectly supporting food security because we did not have a reliable methodology to identify which projects had specific food security objectives. By not including codes that may indirectly support food security in our global disbursement figures, the estimates we present in this report understate to some degree the total amount of global food security assistance that donors have provided.

⁷Section 202(e) of the Food for Peace Act, codified at 7 U.S.C. 1722(e), authorizes USAID to provide funding for project implementation costs, which have typically included administrative expenses such as implementing partner staff salaries, as well as funding to implement cash transfers, food vouchers, and local or regional procurement in Title II projects.

Security Program.⁸ See enclosure I for additional information about our objective, scope, and methodology.

We conducted our work from April 2020 to November 2020 in accordance with all sections of GAO's Quality Assurance Framework that are relevant to our objective. The framework requires that we plan and perform the engagement to obtain sufficient and appropriate evidence to meet our stated objective and to discuss any limitations in our work. We believe that the information and data obtained, and the analysis conducted, provide a reasonable basis for any findings and conclusions in this product.

Background

The Global Food Security Act of 2016 defines food and nutrition security as access to, and availability, utilization, and stability of, sufficient food to meet caloric and nutritional needs for an active and healthy life.⁹ The act further states that activities to enhance food security and nutrition should be comprehensive and address a range of issues, such as emergency food shortages; malnutrition; resilience to food and nutrition insecurity; the capacity of poor, rural populations to improve their agricultural productivity and incomes; and value chain access and efficiency.¹⁰

The U.S. definition of food and nutrition security aligns with the 1996 World Food Summit declaration that food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has identified four dimensions of food security: food availability, economic and physical access to food, food utilization, and stability over time.

In 2015, recognizing the significant global challenges of poverty, hunger, inequality, and climate change, the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This agenda outlined 17 sustainable development goals. One of these goals was to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. Reporting from the UN in 2020 indicates that the world was not on track to meet the goal of ending hunger. In fact, the UN estimated that the number of people suffering from hunger may increase to more than 840 million by 2030.¹¹

The UN has also reported that conflict, climate variability, and economic downturns are key drivers responsible for the rise in global hunger. For example, the UN noted that some countries are experiencing stagnation or even deterioration in their results due to internal conflicts after 25

⁸Title II of the Food for Peace Act, codified at 7 U.S.C. § 1701 et seq., authorizes the provision of U.S. agricultural commodities for humanitarian, development, and nutrition purposes. Title II expenditures are reauthorized through the Farm Bill approximately every 5 years and are funded through appropriations acts funding the Department of Agriculture. Section 3001 of Pub. L. No. 110–246, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, changed the title of the underlying legislation from the Agriculture Trade Development Assistance Act of 1954, also known as Pub. L. No. 480, to the Food for Peace Act.

⁹Pub. L. No. 114–195, § 4(3).

¹⁰See id., § 2. Value chain refers to the activities that bring agricultural products from production to consumption. For example, activities related to processing, storage, and transportation of agricultural products.

¹¹FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World: Transforming Food Systems for Affordable Healthy Diets* (Rome: 2020).

years of progress in reducing hunger and undernutrition.¹² Conflicts often create a complex set of outcomes that affect food security, such as population displacement, destruction of food stocks and assets, and disruption of food markets, according to UN reporting. Further, climate-related disasters such as floods, droughts, and tropical storms have increased food insecurity by undermining food production.¹³ For example, drought accounts for a significant share of damage and losses in agriculture, particularly for livestock and crop production.¹⁴ The UN found that economic shocks have been secondary and tertiary drivers of food insecurity, often worsening the severity of food crises caused by conflict and climate-related disasters.¹⁵ According to this reporting, economic slowdowns and downturns have led to increased unemployment and loss of income, which can exacerbate food insecurity by reducing a family's purchasing power.¹⁶

The UN estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic will also threaten food systems around the world. For example, the businesses of small-scale food producers—which represent a significant proportion of food producers in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—have been limited due to the closure of markets during the pandemic.¹⁷

Estimated Global Food Security Assistance Exceeded \$75 Billion, including More than \$22 Billion from the United States, from 2014 through 2018

We estimate that from 2014 through 2018, the United States and other donors provided a total of more than \$75 billion¹⁸ in global food security assistance, with the United States accounting for more than \$22 billion of this total.¹⁹ Of the total, nearly \$62 billion (about 82 percent) came

¹²FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World: Building Resilience for Peace and Food Security* (Rome: 2017).

¹³FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World: Building Climate Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition* (Rome: 2018).

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World: Safeguarding Against Economic Slowdowns and Downturns* (Rome: 2019).

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷UN, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020* (New York: 2020).

¹⁸This amount and subsequent data for multilateral disbursements do not include disbursements from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Disbursements from IFAD were not disaggregated in a way that we could identify specific funding to food security sectors. In addition, IFAD disbursements for 2014 were not recorded in the OECD CRS. Based on IFAD's commitments from 2015 to 2018, which were disaggregated by food security sector, we estimate that IFAD might have disbursed \$1.8 billion to food security activities during this time period. Our approach estimates IFAD's disbursements for food security assistance from 2015-2018. The \$1.8 billion we estimated represents approximately 75 percent of total disbursements (excluding debt relief) over the time period, which were \$2.4 billion in OECD CRS. Given that IFAD's mission is to transform rural economies and food systems, our approach may underestimate IFAD's disbursements for food security assistance.

¹⁹These amounts represent disbursements reported by OECD DAC members (including the United States) and non-OECD DAC members (bilateral and multilateral donors) for calendar years 2014 through 2018, for activities with food security objectives within the sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, and fishing, and for the sectors of school feeding and food security and safety management in 2018. The Group of Seven's (G7) Food Security and Nutrition Working Group has identified six of these sectors as being directly supportive of global food security, and we have added the sectors of school feeding and food security and safety management to our analysis in order to capture additional U.S. and non-U.S. food security activities. Prior to 2018, OECD's system did not include sectors for school feeding or food security

from individual countries, or bilateral donors, such as the United States. The remainder, approximately \$13 billion (almost 18 percent), came from multilateral donors, including international organizations and institutions with government membership, such as development banks. Estimated global funding for food security assistance increased from 2014 to 2018, from approximately \$14 billion to more than \$16 billion annually. As the largest bilateral donor of this assistance, the United States used various programs and methods to administer its food assistance.

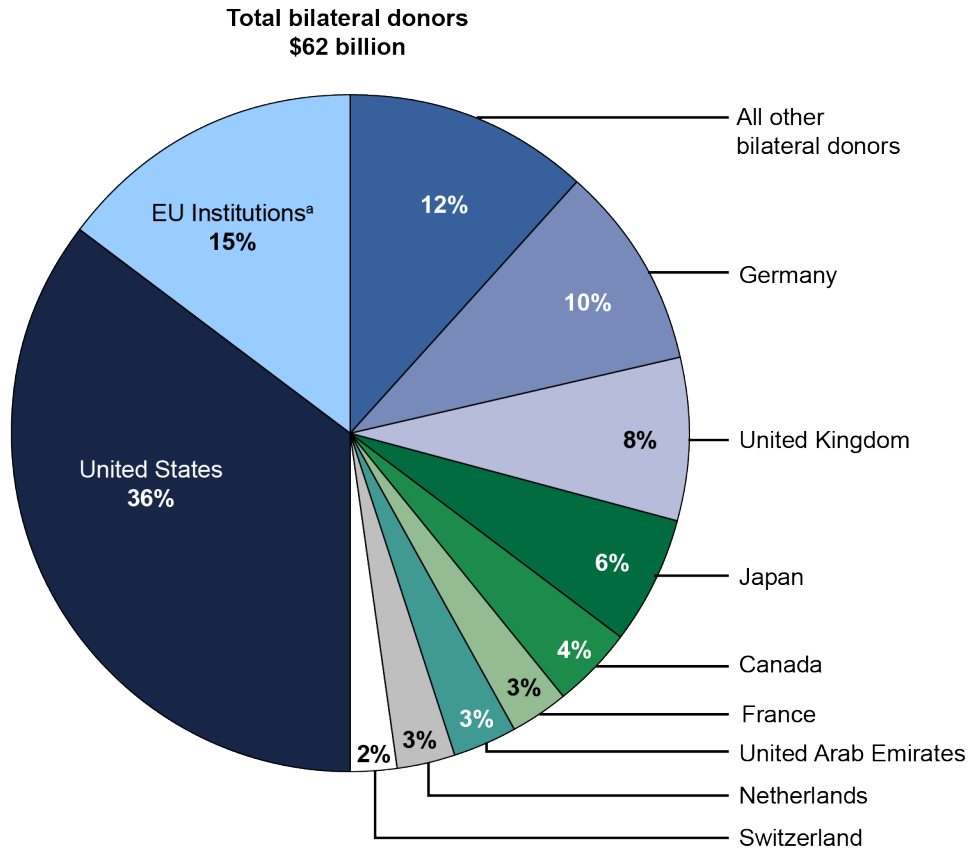
Bilateral donors. We estimated that the United States was the largest of the 43 bilateral donors of global food security assistance from 2014 through 2018, providing more than \$22 billion, or 36 percent of total bilateral funding during this period (see fig. 1).²⁰ Other major bilateral donors included, for example, Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, France, and the United Arab Emirates (see enclosure II for more information on bilateral donors).²¹ Bilateral donors channel their funding through partners such as nonprofit organizations, development banks, and academic institutions, to implement food security activities in recipient countries. For example, we estimated that donors channeled the largest amount of food security assistance through the World Food Program (WFP), which implemented approximately \$19 billion (almost 25 percent of the total) in bilateral assistance from 2014 through 2018. Enclosure III includes additional information about some of these partners.

and safety management, so OECD guidance recommended that donors record these activities under other available sectors. The OECD added these sectors—school feeding, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality—in 2018 but did not revise data previously recorded. As a result, any school feeding or food security and safety management activities recorded prior to 2018 would be recorded under a different sector. For the purposes of our reporting, we have combined the sectors of food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality into one category called “food security and safety management.”

²⁰This amount represents disbursements reported by the United States to the OECD for calendar years 2014 through 2018, for activities within the sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, and fishing, as well as school feeding and food security and safety management as of 2018, when the OECD began collecting data for these sectors.

²¹In addition to bilateral assistance, countries may provide core contributions, or non-earmarked funds, to multilateral organizations. These funds can support global food security assistance and thus represent additional funding provided by bilateral donors. We do not include core contributions in our estimates of bilateral disbursements for food security assistance. Core contributions are reflected in the disbursements made by multilateral organizations. Enclosure II provides information on core contributions as part of the scope of donor funding for global food security assistance.

Figure 1: Estimated Bilateral Disbursements for Global Food Security Assistance, 2014 through 2018



Source: GAO analysis of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System data. | GAO-21-47R

Note: Data include disbursement outflows for global food security assistance in the sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, and fishing, as well as school feeding and food security and safety management as of 2018, when the OECD began collecting data for these sectors. Prior to 2018, the OECD’s system did not include sectors for school feeding or food security and safety management so OECD guidance recommended that donors record these activities under other available sectors. The OECD added these sectors—school feeding, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality—in 2018 but did not revise data previously recorded. As a result, any school feeding or food security and safety management activities recorded prior to 2018 were recorded under a different sector. For the purposes of our reporting, we have combined the sectors of food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality into one category called “food security and safety management.”

^aEU Institutions include the Commission of the European Communities, the European Development Fund, the European Investment Bank, and the Humanitarian Aid Office of the European Commission.

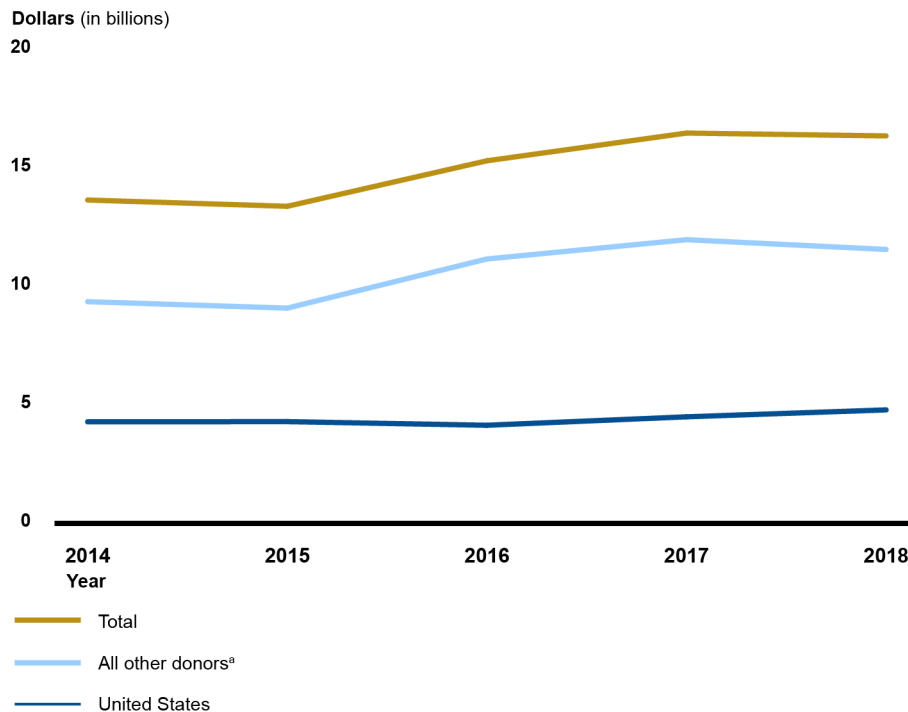
Multilateral donors. Multilateral donors included development banks, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, and UN agencies such as WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and UNICEF. We estimated that these donors provided more than \$13 billion in disbursements for global food security assistance from 2014 through 2018.²² For example, the

²²This amount represents disbursements reported by multilateral organizations to the OECD for calendar years 2014 through 2018, for activities in the sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, and fishing, as well as school feeding and food security and safety

Asian Development Bank disbursed more than \$1 billion and WFP—as a multilateral donor—disbursed about \$980 million toward global food security assistance from 2014 through 2018.²³ Nearly 72 percent of total spending from multilateral disbursements was loans, which were primarily disbursed to agriculture activities.

Global funding. From 2014 through 2018, global disbursements for food security assistance increased, with the highest amount of disbursements, more than \$16 billion, estimated for 2017 (see fig. 2). U.S. disbursements increased slightly from 2014 through 2018. Funding went to activities across multiple sectors that support global food security, such as agriculture and emergency food assistance (see enclosure IV for more information). For more detailed information about the flow of disbursement for food security assistance around the world, see our [interactive graphic](#). Enclosure V includes additional information on the recipients of global food security assistance from 2014 through 2018.

Figure 2: Estimated Global Food Security Disbursements, 2014 through 2018



Source: GAO analysis of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System data. | GAO-21-47R

management as of 2018, when the OECD began collecting data for these sectors. Multilateral organizations initiate and fund development activities using core contributions that they receive from sources such as bilateral and private donors. For activities that may include objectives unrelated to development, the OECD applies a coefficient to assess the share of funding that corresponds to the organization’s development activities. Only this share is reported as official development assistance in the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

²³In addition to partnering with bilateral donors to implement food security assistance, WFP also disbursed assistance as a multilateral donor. WFP reported that core contributions in 2018 were 6 percent of WFP’s total resources, and WFP used these contributions to initiate programming for emergency responses and protracted relief and recovery efforts. For example, WFP reported that it used core contributions to increase assistance in Colombia as it received new arrivals of migrants that year.

Note: Data include disbursement outflows for global food security assistance in the sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, and fishing, as well as school feeding and food security and safety management as of 2018, when the OECD began collecting data for these sectors. Prior to 2018, the OECD's system did not include sectors for school feeding or food security and safety management, so OECD guidance recommended that donors record these activities under other available sectors. The OECD added these sectors—school feeding, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality—in 2018, but did not revise data previously recorded. As a result, any school feeding or food security and safety management activities recorded prior to 2018 were recorded under a different sector. For the purposes of our reporting, we have combined the sectors of food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality into one category called “food security and safety management.”

^a“All other donors” includes bilateral and multilateral donors.

The U.S. government administers global food security assistance primarily through seven federal programs. These programs support both emergency and nonemergency food assistance, which is delivered either as in-kind food or cash-based assistance. We estimated U.S. funding for these modes of assistance from reported obligations for U.S. programs from fiscal years 2014 to 2019.²⁴ While USAID and USDA administer these seven programs, other U.S. agencies also conduct global food security activities.

Emergency and nonemergency food security assistance. From fiscal years 2014 through 2019, the United States obligated an estimated over \$20 billion to seven food security assistance programs that supported emergencies and nonemergency development activities (see table 1).²⁵ For example, the United States obligated an estimated \$9 billion as part of the Emergency Food Security Program funding during this time period. USAID reported that in fiscal year 2019, this assistance supported populations living in or displaced from conflicts such as those in Syria and South Sudan. In addition to emergency food assistance, the United States has supported nonemergency development activities with programs related to agriculture; water, sanitation, and hygiene; and nutrition, among others.²⁶ For example, USDA reported that through the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program in fiscal year 2017, the agency has donated wheat to support local production of vitamin-fortified foods used in school meals in Bangladesh, and has provided training on safe food preparation and storage practices for manufacturers and school officials.

²⁴Although we use disbursement data to describe amounts of global food security funding, we relied on obligation data to describe modes of food assistance delivery because U.S. disbursement data are not delineated such that we could identify modes of assistance. Obligations are reported by fiscal year, and whereas the latest available disbursement data we could report were for calendar year 2018, the latest available obligation data we could report were for fiscal year 2019. An obligation is a definite commitment that creates a legal liability of the government for the payment of goods and services ordered or received, and payment may be made immediately or in the future. An agency incurs an obligation, for example, when it places an order, signs a contract, or awards a grant. Disbursements are amounts paid by federal agencies to liquidate obligations.

²⁵In addition to these seven programs, the United States administers export market development programs and international science and technology programs. For example, USDA manages the Cochran Fellowship, which provides short-term training opportunities to agricultural professionals from middle-income countries, emerging markets, and emerging democracies to work with U.S. universities, government agencies, and private companies.

²⁶The U.S. government coordinates its nonemergency food security assistance through Feed the Future, an interagency global hunger and food security initiative that aims to improve agriculture production and markets; strengthen the resilience of communities; reduce hunger; improve nutrition; and increase the exchange of ideas, technologies, and products. Nonemergency programs listed in table 1 such as McGovern-Dole, Food for Progress, and development programs under Food for Peace are part of this initiative.

Table 1: Primary U.S.-Funded Global Food Security Assistance Programs

Program	Purpose	Funding source	Total estimated obligations from fiscal years 2014 through 2019 (dollars)^a
Food for Peace Title II ^b	Combat malnutrition, improve the livelihoods of vulnerable groups, and mitigate the impact of disasters. Through multiple projects, the federal government provides U.S.-sourced commodities to qualifying organizations to be distributed directly to beneficiaries for both emergency and development purposes. ^c	Annual Appropriations Acts for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies	10 billion ^d
Emergency Food Security Program	Address food insecurity in emergency situations by using market-based approaches, including local, regional, and international procurement; ^e and cash and voucher assistance for food.	Annual Appropriations Acts for the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs	9 billion
McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program	Support education, child development, and food security in low-income, food-deficit countries. Through this program, the federal government donates U.S.-sourced commodities, as well as financial and technical assistance, to support school feeding and maternal and child nutrition projects.	Annual Appropriations Acts for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies	1 billion
Food for Progress Program	Help developing countries and emerging democracies modernize and strengthen their agricultural sectors. U.S. agricultural commodities donated to recipient countries are sold on the local market and the proceeds are used to support agricultural, economic, or infrastructure development programs.	Annual Appropriations Acts for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies as well as the Commodity Credit Corporation ^f	605 million
Farmer-to-Farmer Program	Provide technical assistance, through the use of volunteers, to farmers, farm groups, agribusinesses, and other agriculture sector institutions to promote sustainable improvements in food security and agricultural processing, production, and marketing.	Annual Appropriations Acts for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies	90 million ^g
Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Program	Provide development assistance and emergency relief using locally and regionally procured commodities. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) partners with private voluntary organizations, cooperatives, and the World Food Program to provide this assistance.	Annual Appropriations Acts for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies	35 million ^h

Program	Purpose	Funding source	Total estimated obligations from fiscal years 2014 through 2019 (dollars) ^a
Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust	Provide a cash reserve that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) can use to purchase U.S. commodities in response to unanticipated food crises abroad when other Title II resources are insufficient to meet emergency needs.	Annual Appropriations Acts for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies as well as funds accrued through management of the Trust.	— ^j
Total			20 billion

Source: GAO analysis of USAID, USDA, and Congressional Research Service information. | GAO-21-47R

Note: Data do not include administrative costs; shipping and transportation costs; milling (the process to remove bran and germ from food), twinning (pairing host government food contributions with donor cash contributions to ensure food delivery and distribution), and humanitarian coordination and information management activities; or complementary services.

^aData are as current as the information available in public reporting or as of June and October 2020 for data provided by USAID and USDA.

^bTitle II of the Food for Peace Act authorizes USAID’s provision of U.S. agricultural commodities for humanitarian, development, and nutrition purposes. Title II expenditures are reauthorized through the Farm Bill approximately every 5 years and are funded through appropriations acts funding the Department of Agriculture. Section 3001 of Pub. L. No. 110–246, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, changed the title of the underlying legislation from the Agriculture Trade Development Assistance Act of 1954, also known as Pub. L. 480, to the Food for Peace Act.

^cUSAID is also authorized to monetize U.S.-sourced, in-kind assistance—through the sale of U.S.-donated commodities in local markets—to generate funds for implementing projects. In fiscal year 2019, USAID allowed this type of monetization in one country, Bangladesh.

^dData include obligations to the International Food Relief Partnership, which is a Title II-funded program to support the production, packaging, and stockpiling of specialized (ready-to-use), shelf-stable prepackaged foods, and also for the transport, delivery, and distribution of those commodities by U.S. and non-U.S. nonprofit and public international organizations.

^eLocal, regional, and international procurement constitutes donor purchases of food assistance in countries affected by food crises, in a country on the same continent or a different continent. USAID has reported that donors may use this type of procurement to reduce food assistance costs and delivery time.

^fThe Commodity Credit Corporation is a federal corporation established pursuant to the Commodity Corporation Charter Act of June 29, 1948, ch. 704, as amended, within the Department of Agriculture that authorizes the sale of agricultural commodities to other government agencies and foreign governments and authorizes the donation of food to domestic, foreign, or international relief agencies.

^gCongress has authorized a minimum of \$15 million or 0.6 percent of the amounts authorized for Food for Peace programs (whichever is greater) for the John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmer-to-Farmer program for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2023.

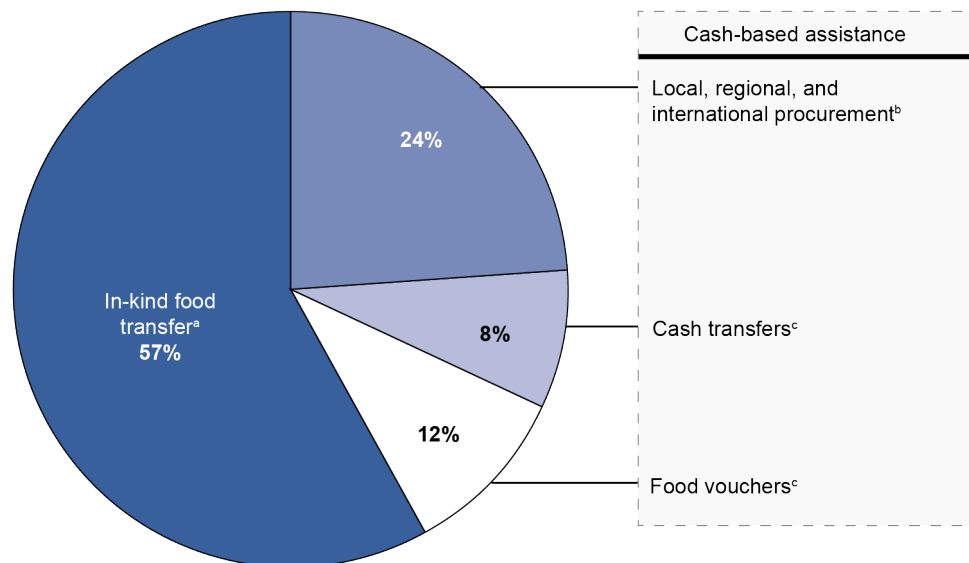
^hCongress did not appropriate funding to the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Program in fiscal years 2014 and 2015.

ⁱUSAID’s most recent use of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust was in 2014, when the agency withdrew \$50 million to purchase commodities and bags of food for South Sudan. According to USDA, at the end of 2019, the trust held about \$282 million.

In-kind and cash-based food assistance. The U.S. government provides food assistance in the form of in-kind food assistance and cash-based assistance. In-kind food assistance consists of commodities purchased in the United States and transported overseas. Cash-based assistance includes cash transfers and food vouchers that recipients can use to purchase their own food. Cash-based assistance also includes locally, regionally, and internationally procured food assistance. For example, from fiscal years 2014 through 2019, the United States provided more than an estimated \$11 billion (more than half of total U.S. food assistance) of U.S. in-kind food aid. We estimate that the U.S. government obligated about \$4.9 billion (24 percent of total

U.S. food assistance) to locally, regionally, and internationally procured food assistance (see fig. 3). According to USAID, the majority of U.S. in-kind food assistance provided through Food for Peace Title II has supported emergency contexts.

Figure 3: Estimated Obligations of U.S. In-Kind and Cash-Based Global Food Assistance, Fiscal Years 2014 through 2019



Source: GAO analysis of USAID and USDA data. | GAO-21-47R

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding. Section 202(e) of the Food for Peace Act authorizes the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide funding for project implementation costs, which have typically included administrative expenses such as implementing partner staff salaries, as well as funding to implement cash transfers, food vouchers, and local or regional procurement in Title II projects. Data do not include administrative costs; shipping and transportation costs; milling (the process to remove bran and germ from food), twinning (pairing host government food contributions with donor cash contributions to ensure food delivery and distribution), and humanitarian coordination and information management activities; or complementary services. Complementary services include activities that enhance the overall effectiveness and impact of the food assistance transfer modalities and contribute to the stabilization of household or community availability of, access to, and use of nutritious foods.

^aIn-kind food assistance consists of commodities purchased in the United States and transported overseas. This assistance is provided under USAID’s Food for Peace Title II Program (emergency and nonemergency funding) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food for Progress Program and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program.

^bLocal, regional, and international procurement is a type of cash-based assistance and constitutes donor purchases of food assistance in countries affected by food crises, in a country on the same continent or a different continent. USAID has reported that donors may use this type of procurement to reduce food aid costs and delivery time. This assistance is provided under USAID’s Emergency Food Security Program, Section 202(e) of the Food for Peace Act, and USDA’s Local and Regional Procurement Program.

^cCash transfers and food vouchers are cash-based assistance and are used by recipients to purchase food on their own. This assistance is provided under USAID’s Emergency Food Security Program and Section 202(e) of the Food for Peace Act.

U.S. agencies that administer global food security assistance. USAID and USDA manage the majority of U.S. global food security assistance. USAID administers U.S. emergency food assistance, coordinates distribution of some U.S. in-kind food assistance, administers development activities across the globe, and leads and coordinates interagency efforts through the Feed the Future initiative. USDA manages the procurement of U.S. in-kind food assistance and administers various programs that provide research and other technical support to global food security activities. Other U.S. agencies, including the Departments of State and the Treasury, the Inter-American Foundation, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Peace

Corps, and the U.S. African Development Foundation, also contribute to U.S. global food security assistance. For example, the Department of State leads U.S. diplomatic engagement, including coordination with multilateral organizations, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation establishes compacts with partner countries to address barriers to economic growth in areas such as agriculture. The Department of the Treasury leads engagement with multilateral development banks and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The Peace Corps supports U.S. volunteers who may work in small, rural communities where they provide technical assistance directly to farmers, families, and organizations to improve crop production, agribusiness income generation, and household nutrition. The U.S. government partners with host governments, international and nongovernmental organizations, and academic institutions to implement U.S. food security development projects. Enclosure III provides additional information about implementing partners through which the United States and others have provided funding for food security activities. Enclosure VI provides additional information about the amount of global food security disbursements from U.S. agencies.


Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report and interactive graphic for review and comment to the Departments of State and the Treasury, USAID, USDA, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the U.S. African Development Foundation, the Inter-American Foundation, and the U.S. Peace Corps. We received written comments from USAID that are reprinted in enclosure VII. In its comments, USAID noted the scope of the agency's global food security assistance and the importance of interagency and global partnerships in promoting and supporting global food security. We incorporated technical comments from USAID, the Department of the Treasury, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the U.S. African Development Foundation, and the U.S. Peace Corps, as appropriate. The Department of State, USDA, and the Inter-American Foundation stated that they had no comments on the report or interactive graphic.

We are sending copies of this report and the accompanying interactive graphic to the Secretaries of Agriculture, State, and the Treasury; the Administrator of USAID; the Director of the Peace Corps; the Chief Executive Officers of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, U.S. African Development Foundation, and Inter-American Foundation; and other interested parties. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-2964 or GurkinC@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report and interactive graphic were Judith Williams (Assistant Director), Jasmine Senior (Analyst in Charge), Deirdre Sutula, Samuel Portnow, Martin De Alteriis, Mark Dowling, William Johnson, Suzanne Kaasa, Christopher Keblitis, Ellen Arnold-Losey, Kerri Lawrence, and Ernie Powell.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chelsea Gurkin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chelsea Kenney Gurkin
Director, International Affairs and Trade

Enclosures – 7

Enclosure I: Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to examine the amount and types of food security assistance that the United States and other donors have provided globally from 2014 through 2018.

Food security assistance funds are disbursed from donor countries and multilateral organizations. In many cases, donor countries contribute funds and work with a multilateral organization or nongovernmental organization as the implementing partner.

¹ Donor countries also provide core contributions to the general fund of multilateral organizations, which then use these funds to initiate their own programs. In determining whether to attribute funds to countries or multilateral organizations, we followed the convention of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) dataset. When a donor country disburses funding for a specific food security project implemented by a multilateral organization, we attributed those funds to the donor country. When a donor country provides core contributions, or un-earmarked funds, to a multilateral organization, which then disburses those funds to a food security project, we attribute those funds to the multilateral organization. For food security assistance provided by countries via core contributions to multilateral organizations, see enclosure II. For additional information on implementing partners, see enclosure III.

To estimate the amount and types of food security assistance provided, we analyzed the CRS dataset from the OECD for calendar years 2014 through 2018, which was the latest year of recorded data at the time of our reporting. The OECD CRS includes information on disbursements, which are reported annually to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) by member nations, non-DAC nations that report voluntarily, and multilateral organizations.² We used this dataset to analyze official development assistance (ODA) disbursements³ toward global food security assistance, using information such as the

¹Reporting nations can report information to the OECD CRS on funding provided through the implementing entity that has responsibility over the funds and has a contract or other binding agreement with the donor. We refer to these implementing entities as implementing partners in this report.

²The OECD defines multilateral organizations as those international institutions with governmental membership, which conduct all, or a significant part, of their activities in favor of development and aid recipient countries. They include multilateral development banks (e.g., the World Bank and regional development banks), United Nations agencies, and regional groupings (e.g., certain European Union and Arab agencies). The OECD CRS also records disbursements made by private foundations, but these entities were not included in the scope of this review. From 2014 to 2018, OECD CRS records indicate that private foundations provided an estimated \$4 billion in global disbursements for food security assistance.

³In this report, we focus on gross disbursements of grants and loans toward food security assistance to report information on global assistance. We did not include disbursements of equity investments in the scope of this review. When using the OECD CRS data, we did not analyze commitments, which often vary from disbursements. We also did not include receipts of funds by donors, which can happen when recipient countries repay loans or return unused grant funds.

associated donor,⁴ recipient,⁵ purpose code, type of flow (grants or loans), calendar year, and whether the funding was bilateral or multilateral.

To identify information about core contributions from donor countries to multilateral organizations, we also used the OECD's Development Assistance Committee 2a (DAC2a) database for calendar years 2014 through 2018. We combined these DAC2a data with information from CRS on multilateral organization activities. This allowed us to assess additional donor country support of food security assistance through core contributions to multilateral organizations.

To determine which disbursements are part of food security assistance, we used a methodology developed by the Group of Seven (G7) Food Security Working Group, which also uses OECD CRS data to report on global food security disbursements. This methodology takes advantage of the fact that each disbursement in the CRS data is associated with a sector code and purpose code. According to OECD guidance, donors report the purpose code or sector of destination for their disbursement in the OECD CRS based on the economic and social structures that the donor intends for the funding to support. Donors can assign only one sector for each activity. For activities cutting across several sectors, donors have to classify the activity as multi-sector or choose the sector corresponding to the largest component of the activity. In 2016, the G7 Food Security Working Group published a list of purpose codes related to direct assistance for agriculture, fishing, food security, and nutrition.⁶ For our analysis, we included any disbursements that were classified as ODA loans or ODA grants and that had a purpose code on the G7 Food Security Working Group list of direct assistance purpose codes. We took this approach because, as described below, we did not have a reliable methodology for identifying the portion of projects assigned to other codes that were intended for food security projects.

⁴The disbursements we report for multilateral donors do not include disbursements from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Disbursements from IFAD were not disaggregated in a way that we could identify specific funding to food security sectors. All of IFAD's disbursements during this time period were reported under the sectors "debt relief" and "sector not specified." In addition, IFAD disbursements for 2014 were not recorded in the OECD CRS. Based on IFAD's commitments from 2015 to 2018, which were disaggregated by food security sector, we estimate that IFAD might have disbursed \$1.8 billion to food security activities during this time period. To calculate this estimate, we took the total funds IFAD committed to the food security sectors in our scope for 2015 through 2018, and divided that amount by IFAD's total commitments (with the exception of debt relief) during that time period. We then multiplied this ratio by IFAD's total disbursements to unspecified activities to determine the amount of this disbursement that might have supported food security activities. This approach provides an estimate of IFAD's disbursements for food security assistance from 2015-2018. The \$1.8 billion we estimated represents approximately 75 percent of total disbursements (excluding debt relief) over the time period, which were \$2.4 billion in OECD CRS. Given that IFAD's mission is to transform rural economies and food systems, our approach may underestimate IFAD's disbursements for food security assistance.

⁵Recipients, as defined by the OECD, include developing countries and territories that are eligible to receive official development assistance based on their categorization as "least developed countries" by the United Nations or if their per capita income is less than \$12,235, as of reporting for 2018 and 2019 ODA.

⁶Group of Seven, *G7 Food Security Working Group Chair's Report: Financial Reporting Methodology on Food Security and Nutrition* (2016). The full list of direct assistance purpose codes includes agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food aid, and fishing. The G7 established this methodology to measure the financial contributions of the G7 members toward their commitment to lift 500 million people out of hunger and malnutrition in developing countries by 2030. In its reporting, the G7 noted that a limitation to this approach was that each member had a different method for allocating purpose codes to its activities. Some G7 members allocate only one CRS code for each project, while other members categorize one project under up to three CRS codes.

We also included disbursements under the purpose codes “school feeding,” “food security policy and administrative management,” “household food security programs,” and “food safety and quality,” which the OECD added to the OECD CRS in 2018.⁷ We chose to add these purpose codes based on our knowledge of U.S. and non-U.S. activities under the “school feeding” purpose code or related to school feeding, and because of the direct relevance of the food security and safety management purpose codes to our scope. While the OECD CRS purpose codes capture the primary purpose of a program, they do not account for activities performed by the program that may be related to other objectives. As a result, some of the activities captured under the purpose codes we selected may include efforts that were not related to food security.

Further, there may be additional projects recorded in the OECD CRS that have secondary purposes related to food security but were not assigned a purpose code related to agriculture, fishing, food security, or nutrition. For example, a project focused on maternal health might have a nutritional component but is classified under the “reproductive health care” purpose code. The G7 Food Security Working Group also published a methodology to determine the scope of this assistance. This involves running a keyword search over project descriptions for projects with purpose codes that the G7 defines as indirectly relevant to food security.⁸ This keyword list is in English, whereas in the OECD CRS many projects are described in other languages, or have no description. For this reason, and because not all G7 countries use this methodology, we did not include these additional indirect projects in our interactive graphic or in our descriptions of global funding in this report. To estimate the full scope of U.S. global food security assistance in enclosure VI, we took additional steps to review U.S. data reported for the purpose codes that the G7 identified as indirectly relevant to food security. We performed an automated text search using the G7 keyword list and then selected a non-generalizable sample of U.S. activities that had used any of the keywords. We reviewed the project descriptions of this sample to determine whether the activities identified by the keywords were relevant to food security. Based on this review, we removed three keywords, added one keyword, and modified four keywords to improve the accuracy of the keyword search.⁹ We used this modified list of keywords and the indirect purpose code list to identify indirect food security assistance provided by the United

⁷Prior to 2018, the OECD’s system did not include sectors for school feeding or food security and safety management, so OECD guidance recommended that donors record these activities under other available sectors. The OECD added these sectors—school feeding, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality—in 2018 but did not revise data previously recorded. As a result, any school feeding or food security and safety management activities recorded prior to 2018 were recorded under a different sector.

⁸Examples of purpose codes that the G7 identified as indirectly related to food security include basic education, basic health care, water and sanitation, transport and storage, and forestry.

⁹The full list of terms developed by the G7 includes access to food, aflatoxin, breastfeeding, cash transfer, deworming, diarrheal disease, diet, feeding, feeding practices, feeding program, food availability, food insecurity, food policy, food safety, food security, food storage, food utilization, fortification, GAM, garden, global acute malnutrition, handwashing, helminth, hunger, hygiene, iodine, iron, iron folic acid, lean season, malnutrition, MAM, micronutrient, mineral, nutrition, nutrition education, SAM, severe acute malnutrition, stunting, supplement, supplementation, under nutrition, vitamin, wasting, and zinc. For our analysis, we used this list but removed the term “feeding program” because the term “feeding” captured those results, and we removed the terms “mineral” and “supplement” because they produced results for which the program descriptions did not indicate food security objectives. For the terms “GAM,” “iron,” “MAM,” and “SAM,” we made slight adjustments to the terms (for example, adding a space before and after an acronym) to improve the precision of our keyword search.

States, which is reported with U.S. direct food security assistance in enclosure VI.¹⁰

We assessed the reliability of the OECD CRS and DAC2A datasets through documentation review, electronic testing, and interviews with knowledgeable OECD and U.S. agency officials. We did not independently assess the underlying data from each donor, but determined that the data for the direct purpose codes were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of describing the largest donors, recipient nations, and types of assistance provided for certain sectors of food security, including those the G7 had determined were central to food security. Based on the additional steps we took to review U.S. disbursement data, we determined that the U.S. disbursement data for indirect purpose codes were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of describing U.S. agency disbursements in enclosure VI.

To describe modes of delivery—in-kind food transfers and cash-based assistance—for U.S. food assistance, we compiled and analyzed obligation data provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and available in public reports. We relied on obligation data to describe modes of delivery because the OECD CRS does not delineate this type of information. USAID provided data on obligations of cash transfers; food vouchers; and local, regional, and international procurement of assistance for Section 202(e) of the Food for Peace Act, and USDA provided data on the Food for Progress and Local and Regional Procurement programs. We compiled additional data on U.S. obligations for cash transfers; food vouchers; and local, regional, and international procurement from USAID's *Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP) Reports to Congress* for fiscal years 2014 through 2019. We identified in-kind assistance from *International Food Assistance Reports to Congress*, and USDA's public data on the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program for the same time period. Food for Peace Title II, Food for Progress, and the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program all provide in-kind assistance.

To verify the information provided by USAID and USDA, we compared the data to information recorded in Foreign Aid Explorer. We also reviewed information provided by USAID and USDA on each agency's data collection and validation processes for its obligation and modality data. According to USAID, for cash transfers, food vouchers, and local, regional, and international procurement assistance, the obligation amounts for each modality are disaggregated within the documentation for each award made under EFSP and 202(e) of the Food for Peace Act, and tracked accordingly in USAID's system of record for this data. We aggregated the funding by these modes of assistance based on the mode identified for each award in USAID's EFSP Reports to Congress and the 202(e) data USAID provided. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable to estimate obligations and modalities of assistance for U.S. food assistance authorized in the U.S. Food for Peace Act and for the Emergency Food Security Program. The

¹⁰While each U.S. agency compiles its disbursement data, USAID determined the final categorization of these data by sector for disbursements reported to the OECD CRS. We checked our agency-level results with the major U.S. agencies that provide food assistance funding, which include the African Development Foundation, the Departments of State and the Treasury, the Inter-American Foundation, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), USAID, USDA, and the U.S. Peace Corps. We provided each agency with aggregate and line item lists of its direct and indirect food security activities and disbursements (based on our methodology outlined above) recorded in CRS from 2014 through 2018. All of the agencies, except the Department of State, verified their funding amounts. The MCC requested two adjustments to its results. The first adjustment was to include about \$300 million of indirect funding from the MCC that was not captured through our automated text search methodology. The second adjustment was to remove \$75 million of indirect funding that the MCC could not verify was part of its food security disbursements. We agreed to make these modifications to the data reported in enclosure VI, where we report indirect funding for U.S. agencies.

figures we report do not include administrative and transport costs, and are as current as the data available in public reporting or provided by USAID in October 2020 and by USDA in June 2020.

We conducted our work from April 2020 to November 2020 in accordance with all sections of GAO's Quality Assurance Framework that are relevant to our objective. The framework requires that we plan and perform the engagement to obtain sufficient and appropriate evidence to meet our stated objective and to discuss any limitations in our work. We believe that the information and data obtained, and the analysis conducted, provide a reasonable basis for our finding in this product.

Enclosure II: Bilateral Assistance and Core Contributions to Global Food Security Assistance

Individual countries, or bilateral donors, provide global food security funding for activities in recipient countries, as well as funding to multilateral donors to support operational costs and programming. Donors report funding information to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD records funding from bilateral donors for activities in recipient countries as bilateral assistance. This bilateral assistance includes funding provided through organizations that function as implementing partners. In addition to this assistance, bilateral donors provide multilateral organizations with core contributions, which can be used to initiate the multilateral organization's own programs. Core contributions are non-earmarked funds that can include activities to address global food security. To present the full scope of global food security assistance provided by bilateral donors, we have listed the bilateral assistance and core contributions provided by bilateral donors from 2014 through 2018 in table 2.¹

Table 2: Estimated Bilateral Assistance and Core Contributions Provided by Country Donors for Global Food Security Assistance, 2014 through 2018

Figures in dollars

Bilateral donor	Bilateral assistance ^a	Core contributions ^b	Total assistance from bilateral donor
United States	22 billion	2.2 billion	24.2 billion
EU Institutions ^c	9.1 billion	0	9.1 billion
Germany	6.1 billion	995 million	7.1 billion
United Kingdom	4.8 billion	2.3 billion	7.1 billion
Japan	3.7 billion	1.5 billion	5.2 billion
Canada	2.5 billion	542 million	3.1 billion
France	1.9 billion	1 billion	2.9 billion
Netherlands	1.6 billion	494 million	2.1 billion
United Arab Emirates	1.6 billion	31 million	1.6 billion
Sweden	647 million	824 million	1.5 billion
Norway	907 million	464 million	1.4 billion
Switzerland	1 billion	306 million	1.3 billion
Australia	879 million	323 million	1.2 billion
Belgium	736 million	164 million	900 million
Italy	482 million	407 million	889 million

¹To calculate the amount of core contribution funding provided by donors to multilateral organizations and that supported global food security assistance, we used the OECD's suggested methodology for calculating sectoral imputed multilateral aid. Specifically, we calculated each organization's funding flows to a given sector as a share of the organization's total aid over the past three years (i.e., year n , $n-1$, and $n-2$). The resulting value was applied to donors' contributions to the core resources of that agency in year n . The resulting amount represents the imputed flows from donors to a particular sector through this organization. We calculated these values for the sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, and fishing, as well as school feeding and food security and safety management as of 2018, when the OECD began collecting data for these sectors. The results are only an approximation and were calculated only for organizations that reported inflows and outflows to the OECD.

Bilateral donor	Bilateral assistance^a	Core contributions^b	Total assistance from bilateral donor
Korea	671 million	182 million	854 million
Denmark	571 million	264 million	834 million
Saudi Arabia	514 million	69 million	582 million
Spain	337 million	205 million	542 million
Ireland	331 million	132 million	463 million
Finland	251 million	147 million	398 million
New Zealand	226 million	47 million	273 million
Kuwait	263 million	9 million	272 million
Austria	107 million	143 million	250 million
Poland	180 million	21 million	200 million
Luxembourg	97 million	32 million	129 million
Russia	0	120 million	120 million
Turkey	60 million	43 million	103 million
All other countries ^d	81 million	138 million	219 million

Source: GAO analysis of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System and Development Assistance Committee data. | GAO-21-47R

Note: All numbers are rounded. Data include disbursements for global food security assistance within the sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, and fishing, as well as school feeding and food security and safety management as of 2018, when the OECD began collecting data for these sectors. Prior to 2018, the OECD's system did not include sectors for school feeding or food security and safety management, so OECD guidance recommended that donors record these activities under other available sectors. The OECD added these sectors—school feeding, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality—in 2018 but did not revise data previously recorded. As a result, any school feeding or food security and safety management activities recorded prior to 2018 were recorded under a different sector. For the purposes of our reporting, we have combined the sectors of food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality into one category called “food security and safety management.”

^aBilateral assistance includes any assistance that a donor country provided directly to activities in a recipient country or territory.

^bCore contributions are non-earmarked funds that multilateral organizations can use to initiate their own programs. The OECD applies a coefficient to these contributions to assess the share of funding that corresponds to the organization's development activities. Only this share is reported as official development assistance.

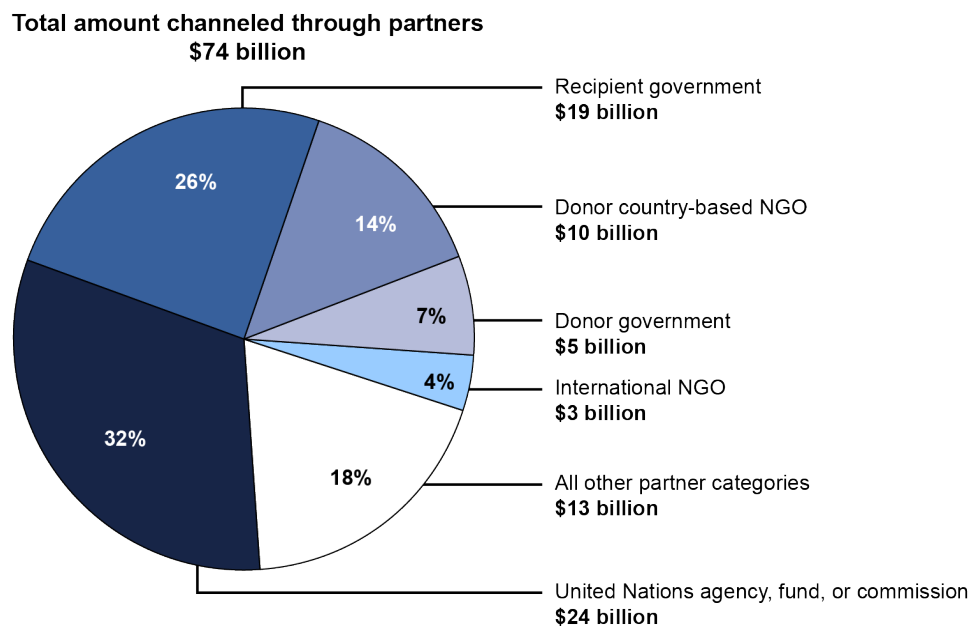
^cThe OECD considers the European Union to be a donor country because it is a full member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee and a donor of official development aid. EU Institutions include the Commission of the European Communities, the European Development Fund, the European Investment Bank, and the Humanitarian Aid Office of the European Commission.

^d“All other countries” includes donor countries that provided less than \$100 million total in bilateral assistance and core contributions from 2014 through 2018.

Enclosure III: Global Funding to Implementing Partners

The United States and other donors work with multiple partners, such as international organizations, academic institutions, and development banks, to implement global food security activities. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development records funding provided through the implementing entity that has responsibility over the funds and has a contract or other binding agreement with the donor. From calendar years 2014 through 2018, about one-third of global food security assistance was provided through United Nations (UN) agencies, funds, or commissions, such as the World Food Program, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (see fig. 4). UN organizations that implemented over \$100 million in global food security assistance funding from the United States and other donors are described in table 3.

Figure 4: Estimated Global Food Security Disbursements That Donors Channeled through Implementing Partners, 2014 through 2018



Legend: NGO = nongovernmental organization.

Source: GAO analysis of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System data. | GAO-21-47R

Note: Data include disbursement outflows for global food security assistance in the sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, and fishing, as well as school feeding and food security and safety management as of 2018, when the OECD began collecting data for these sectors. Prior to 2018, the OECD's system did not include sectors for school feeding or food security and safety management, so OECD guidance recommended that donors record these activities under other available sectors. The OECD added these sectors—school feeding, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality—in 2018 but did not revise data previously recorded. As a result, any school feeding or food security and safety management activities recorded prior to 2018 were recorded under a different sector. For the purposes of our reporting, we have combined the sectors of food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality into one category called “food security and safety management.”

Table 3: United Nations Organizations That Implemented an Estimated over \$100 million in Global Food Security Assistance Activities, 2014 through 2018

Figures in dollars

Implementing partner	U.S. disbursements	All other donors' disbursements	Total
World Food Program	9 billion	10 billion	19 billion
Food and Agriculture Organization	102 million	1.3 billion	1.4 billion
United Nations Children's Fund	221 million	1.1 billion	1.3 billion
International Fund for Agricultural Development	10 million	689 million	699 million
United Nations Development Program	5 million	287 million	292 million
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	0	205 million	205 million
United Nations Office of Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs	0	134 million	134 million

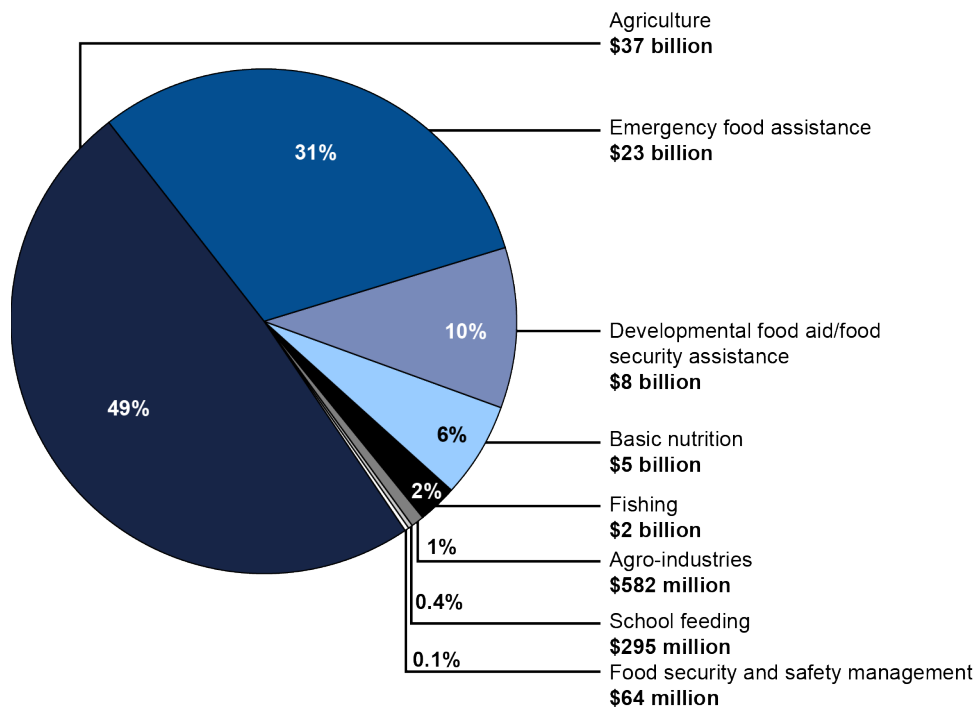
Source: GAO analysis of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System data. | GAO-21-47R

Note: All numbers are rounded. Data include United Nations organizations that operated as implementing partners and through which greater than \$100 million of disbursements were provided during the time period for global food security assistance in the sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, and fishing, as well as school feeding and food security and safety management as of 2018, when the OECD began collecting data for these sectors. Prior to 2018, the OECD's system did not include sectors for school feeding or food security and safety management, so OECD guidance recommended that donors record these activities under other available sectors. The OECD added these sectors—school feeding, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality—in 2018 but did not revise data previously recorded. As a result, any school feeding or food security and safety management activities recorded prior to 2018 were recorded under a different sector. For the purposes of our reporting, we have combined the sectors of food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality into one category called “food security and safety management.”

Enclosure IV: Selected Global Food Security Sectors That Received Funding

Bilateral and multilateral donors have provided funding to eight sectors that directly support global food security, including agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, fishing, school feeding, and food security and safety management. Activities in the sector of agriculture have received almost 50 percent of global bilateral and multilateral funding. The share of this disbursement across these eight sectors is described in figure 5. Additional descriptions of these sectors are provided in figure 6.









Figure 5: Estimated Global Disbursements by Food Security Assistance Sector, 2014 through 2018



Source: GAO analysis of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System data. | GAO-21-47R

Note: We identified six of these sectors based on the Group of Seven's (G7) categorization of global food security funding. Using the OECD's list of purpose codes, which identify the purpose of individual assistance activities, the G7 categorized six of the eight sectors in this figure as being directly supportive of global food security. We added the sectors of school feeding and food security and safety management to account for additional U.S. and non-U.S. food security activities. Prior to 2018, the OECD's system did not include sectors for school feeding or food security and safety management, so OECD guidance recommended that donors record these activities under other available sectors. The OECD added these sectors—school feeding, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality—in 2018 but did not revise data previously recorded. As a result, any school feeding or food security and safety management activities recorded prior to 2018 were recorded under a different sector. For the purposes of our reporting, we have combined the sectors of food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality into one category called "food security and safety management."

Figure 6: Descriptions of Sectors That Support Global Food Security

 <p>Agriculture</p>	<p>Various areas of agriculture assistance, such as agricultural policy and administrative management; agricultural land surveys; supply of seeds, fertilizers, and agricultural machinery/equipment; irrigation; and agriculture research.</p>
 <p>Agro-industries</p>	<p>Industries related to staple food processing, dairy products, slaughterhouses and equipment, meat and fish processing and preserving, oils and fats, sugar refineries, beverages/tobacco, and animal feed production.</p>
 <p>Basic nutrition</p>	<p>Activities such as micronutrient deficiency identification and supplementation; infant and young child feeding promotion, including breastfeeding; nonemergency management of acute malnutrition; staple food fortification including salt iodization; nutritional status monitoring; and research, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation in support of these interventions.</p>
 <p>Developmental food aid/food security assistance</p>	<p>The supply of food under national or international programs, including transport costs and cash payments made for food supplies.</p>
 <p>Emergency food assistance</p>	<p>Activities to provide and distribute food; cash and vouchers for the purchase of food; and nonmedical nutritional interventions for the benefit of crisis-affected people, including refugees and internally displaced people.</p>
 <p>Fishing</p>	<p>Activities such as fishing sector policy, planning, and programs; institution capacity building; ocean and coastal fishing; fishery utilization; fish stock protection; aquaculture; and fishery research.</p>
 <p>School feeding^a</p>	<p>Activities to provide meals or snacks at schools and other uses of food for the achievement of educational outcomes. These activities may help reduce children's hunger during the school day if, for example, the provision of food contains bioavailable nutrients to address specific nutrition needs.</p>
 <p>Food security and safety management^a</p>	<p>Activities such as food security, safety, and quality policy; institution capacity strengthening; coordination and governance mechanisms; and short or long-term household food security efforts that improve access to a nutritionally adequate diet.</p>

Source: GAO analysis of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System information. | GAO-21-47R

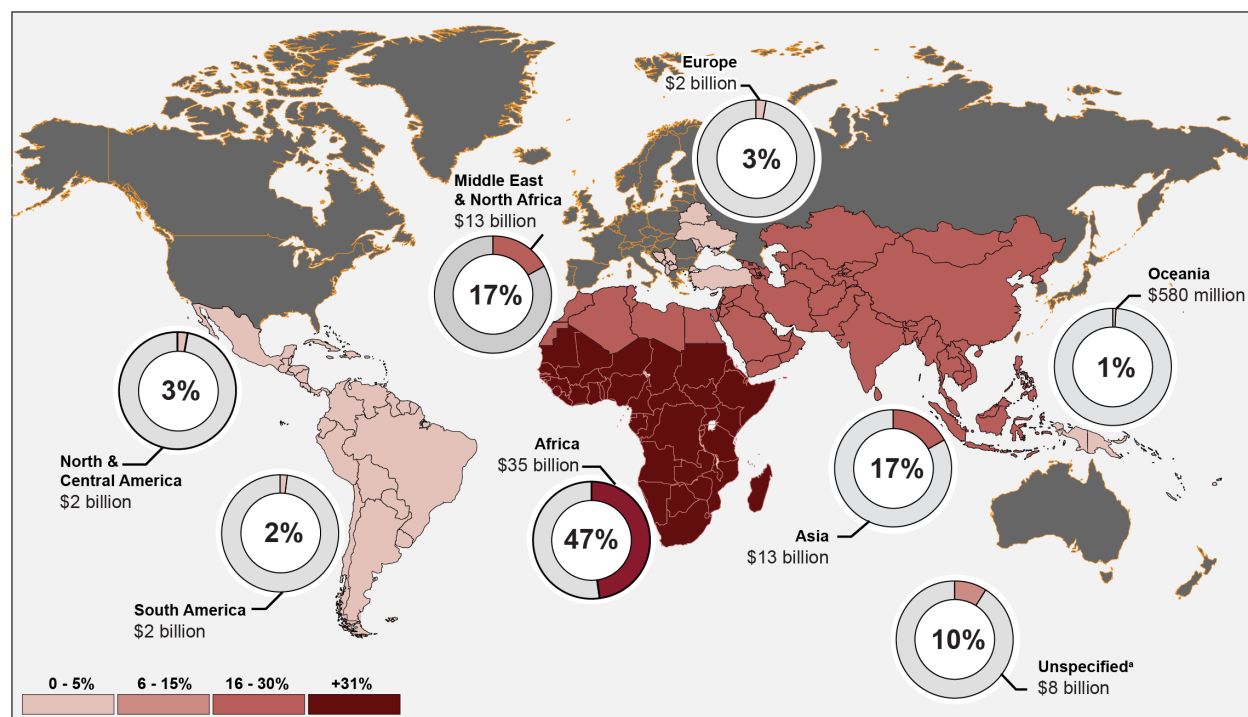
Notes: We identified these sectors based on the Group of Seven's (G7) categorization of global food security funding. Using the OECD's list of purpose codes, which identify the purpose of individual aid activities, the G7 categorized six of the eight sectors in this table as being directly supportive of global food security. We added the sectors of school feeding and food security and safety management to account for additional U.S. and non-U.S. food security activities.

^aPrior to 2018, the OECD's system did not include sectors for school feeding or food security and safety management, so OECD guidance recommended that donors record these activities under other available sectors. The OECD added these sectors—school feeding, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality—in 2018 but did not revise data previously recorded. As a result, any school feeding or food security and safety management activities recorded prior to 2018 were recorded under a different sector. For the purposes of our reporting, we have combined the sectors of food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality into one category called "food security and safety management."

Enclosure V: Global Recipients of Food Security Assistance

From 2014 through 2018, nearly every region of the world received global food security assistance (see fig. 7). Africa (excluding North Africa) received nearly 50 percent of this assistance, while Asia and the Middle East and North Africa each received about 17 percent. Table 4 provides a list of countries and regions to which donors have disbursed over \$1 billion for global food security activities from 2014 through 2018. For additional information on disbursement outflows to recipient countries, refer to our [interactive graphic](#). We estimated that donors have disbursed more than \$3 billion during this time period to activities in countries that have experienced conflict or climate shocks, such as Ethiopia, Syria, South Sudan, and Yemen.

Figure 7: Estimated Regional Shares of Global Food Security Disbursements, 2014 through 2018



Source: GAO analysis of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System data. | GAO-21-47R

Notes: Amounts are rounded to the nearest billion. Countries not categorized on the scale are either donors or countries that are not identified as recipients in the OECD’s Creditor Reporting System. Data include disbursement outflows to recipients for global food security assistance in the sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, and fishing, as well as school feeding and food security and safety management as of 2018, when the OECD began collecting data for these sectors. Prior to 2018, the OECD’s system did not include sectors for school feeding or food security and safety management, so OECD guidance recommended that donors record these activities under other available sectors. The OECD added these sectors—school feeding, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality—in 2018 but did not revise data previously recorded. As a result, any school feeding or food security and safety management activities recorded prior to 2018 were recorded under a different sector. For the purposes of our reporting, we have combined the sectors of food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality into one category called “food security and safety management.”

The recipients of assistance identified in this map include Afghanistan; Africa, regional; Albania; Algeria; America, regional; Angola; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Armenia; Asia, regional; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Belarus; Belize; Benin; Bhutan; Bilateral, unspecified; Bolivia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Botswana; Brazil; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cabo Verde; Cambodia; Cameroon; Caribbean and Central America, regional; Caribbean, regional; Central African Republic; Central Asia, regional; Chad; Chile; China (People’s Republic of); Colombia; Comoros; Congo; Cook Islands; Costa Rica; Côte d’Ivoire; Cuba; Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Djibouti; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt; El Salvador; Equatorial Guinea; Eritrea; Eswatini; Ethiopia;

Europe, regional; Far East Asia, regional; Fiji; Gabon; Gambia; Georgia; Ghana; Grenada; Guatemala; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; India; Indonesia; Iran; Iraq; Jamaica; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Kiribati; Kosovo; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Lebanon; Lesotho; Liberia; Libya; Madagascar; Malawi; Malaysia; Maldives; Mali; Marshall Islands; Mauritania; Mauritius; Mexico; Micronesia; Middle East, regional; Moldova; Mongolia; Montenegro; Montserrat; Morocco; Mozambique; Myanmar; Namibia; Nauru; Nepal; Nicaragua; Niger; Nigeria; Niue; North Macedonia; North of Sahara, regional; Oceania, regional; Pakistan; Palau; Panama; Papua New Guinea; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Rwanda; Saint Helena; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Samoa; Sao Tome and Principe; Senegal; Serbia; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; Solomon Islands; Somalia; South and Central Asia, regional; South Africa; South America, regional; South Asia, regional; South of Sahara, regional; South Sudan; Sri Lanka; States Ex-Yugoslavia, unspecified; Sudan; Suriname; Syrian Arab Republic; Tajikistan; Tanzania; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Togo; Tokelau; Tonga; Tunisia; Turkey; Turkmenistan; Tuvalu; Uganda; Ukraine; Uruguay; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; Venezuela; Vietnam; Wallis and Futuna; West Bank and Gaza Strip; Yemen; Zambia; and Zimbabwe.

^aUnspecified includes funding recorded as “regional” and “unspecified” in the OECD’s Creditor Reporting System. Funding may be described as “regional” if the funding benefits multiple countries in a region, and “unspecified” if it benefits several regions or covered administrative costs, assistance to refugees in the donor country, and research costs.

Table 4: Recipients of at Least \$1 Billion of Global Food Security Assistance, 2014 through 2018

Country or region	Disbursements received (dollars)
Ethiopia	5 billion
Syrian Arab Republic	4 billion
South Sudan	3 billion
Yemen	3 billion
Nigeria	2 billion
India	2 billion
Afghanistan	2 billion
South of Sahara, regional ^a	2 billion
Kenya	2 billion
Sudan	2 billion
Somalia	1 billion
Pakistan	1 billion
Bangladesh	1 billion
Mali	1 billion
Egypt	1 billion
Niger	1 billion
Turkey	1 billion
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1 billion
Malawi	1 billion
Uganda	1 billion
Jordan	1 billion
Tanzania	1 billion
Mozambique	1 billion
Africa, regional ^a	1 billion

Source: GAO analysis of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System data. | GAO-21-47R

Note: Amounts are rounded to the nearest billion. Data include disbursement outflows to recipients that received over \$1 billion total for global food security assistance in the sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, and fishing, as well as school feeding and food security and safety management as of 2018, when the OECD began collecting data for these sectors. Prior

to 2018, the OECD's system did not include sectors for school feeding or food security and safety management, so OECD guidance recommended that donors record these activities under other available sectors. The OECD added these sectors—school feeding, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality—in 2018 but did not revise data previously recorded. As a result, any school feeding or food security and safety management activities recorded prior to 2018 were recorded under a different sector. For the purposes of our reporting, we have combined the sectors of food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality into one category called “food security and safety management.” Data in this table do not include more than \$6 billion categorized as “bilateral unspecified,” which OECD guidance describes as disbursements that benefit several regions or are for administrative costs, aid to refugees in the donor country, and research costs.

^aRegional indicates that the activities benefited multiple recipient countries in the identified region.

Enclosure VI: U.S. Funding for Global Food Security Assistance by Agency

The United States has provided assistance to a wide range of global food security activities. This assistance has supported efforts in agriculture and nutrition, as well as water and sanitation and reproductive health. To identify the full scope of this assistance, we used data that the United States has reported to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS). The Group of Seven's (G7) Food Security Working Group has used this same data to categorize funding by sectors that directly and indirectly support global food security. Direct assistance includes sectors related to agriculture, fishing, food security, and nutrition. Indirect assistance includes activities within sectors that have explicit objectives to improve food security or nutrition. We used the G7's methodology to identify both types of assistance for the U.S. government. U.S. total disbursements to direct and indirect food security assistance sectors from 2014 through 2018 was approximately \$25 billion. Table 5 lists this funding to both categories of sectors as reported by U.S. agencies that have disbursed this assistance.

Table 5: Estimated U.S. Agency Disbursements for Global Food Security Assistance, 2014 through 2018

U.S. agency ^a	Total (dollars)
U.S. Agency for International Development	22 billion
Department of Agriculture	2 billion
Millennium Challenge Corporation	705 million ^b
Department of the Treasury	184 million ^c
U.S. African Development Foundation	53 million
Inter-American Foundation	30 million
Department of State	8 million
U.S. Trade and Development Agency	2 million
Department of the Interior	1 million
Department of Defense	730,000
Department of Commerce	10,000
Total	25 billion

Source: GAO analysis of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) data. | GAO-21-47R

Note: U.S. funding to direct food security assistance sectors was approximately \$22 billion and to indirect food security assistance sectors approximately \$3 billion. Data include disbursements for global food security assistance within the direct food security sectors of agriculture, agro-industries, basic nutrition, developmental food aid/food security assistance, emergency food assistance, fishing, food security and safety management (which is a combination of three sectors, food security policy and administrative management, household food security programs, and food safety and quality), and school feeding. Indirect food security sectors include basic education; basic health care; biodiversity; business support services and institutions; disaster prevention and preparedness; energy generation, nonrenewable sources, unspecified; energy generation, renewable sources—multiple technologies; environment policy and administrative management; fertilizer minerals; fertilizer plants; forestry; formal sector financial intermediaries; health education; health personnel development; informal/semiformal financial intermediaries; multisector aid for basic social services; reconstruction relief and rehabilitation; reproductive health care; rural development; social/welfare services; statistical capacity building; transport and storage; urban development and management; and water and sanitation.

^aAlthough U.S. Peace Corps volunteers conduct grassroots development activities to improve global food security, the agency does not disburse global food security assistance directly. As a result, Peace Corps funding is not included here.

^bThis total for the Millennium Challenge Corporation includes \$300 million in activities that were not identified by our methodology in the OECD CRS. The agency provided additional information to indicate that this funding was used to support food security assistance. As a result, we have included that funding in our estimate. This total does not

include \$75 million of indirect funding that we identified in the OECD CRS but that the Millennium Challenge Corporation could not verify was part of its food security disbursements.

^cThe Department of the Treasury contributed about \$184 million to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program from 2014 through 2018.

Enclosure VII: Comments from the United States Agency for International Development



Chelsa Kenney Gurkin
Director, International Affairs and Trade
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20226

Re: *Global Food Security: Information on Spending and Types of Assistance Provided by the United States and Other Donors (GAO-21-47R)*

Dear Ms. Gurkin:

I am pleased to provide the formal response of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to the draft report produced by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) titled, *Global Food Security: Information on Spending and Types of Assistance Provided by the United States and Other Donors (GAO-21-47R)*.

The draft report contains no recommendations for USAID, but we are pleased the GAO noted the important role the Agency plays in advancing global food security. The GAO highlighted \$22 billion in spending for global food security assistance from USAID from 2014-2018. USAID emergency food assistance brought relief to the most vulnerable, saving lives and supporting the early recovery of people affected by conflict and natural disaster emergencies. Feed the Future programming works to improve agriculture production and markets; strengthen the resilience of communities; reduce hunger; improve nutrition; and increase the exchange of ideas, technologies, and products. Through emergency food assistance and longer-term food security activities, USAID is committed to continuing a comprehensive approach to fighting hunger and strengthening food security.

I am transmitting this letter and the enclosed comments from USAID for inclusion in the GAO's final report. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft report, and for the courtesies extended by your staff while conducting this engagement. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the complete and thorough evaluation of our food security programs.

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Nutt

Frederick M. Nutt *November 6, 2020*
Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Management

Enclosure: a/s

**COMMENTS BY THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON
THE DRAFT REPORT PRODUCED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT
ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (GAO) TITLED, *GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY:
INFORMATION ON SPENDING AND TYPES OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE
UNITED STATES AND OTHER DONORS (GAO-21-47R)***

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) would like to thank the Government Accountability Office (GAO) for the opportunity to respond to this draft report. We appreciate the extensive work of the GAO engagement team.

The United States, through USAID and its interagency partners, plays an important role in the promotion and support of global food security. This report highlights the scope of the issue and demonstrates that the U.S. cannot solve this problem alone. USAID leverages Feed the Future's whole-of-government approach alongside increased support from other donors for more effective global food security programming.

In addition to the programs outlined in this report, USAID's International Food Relief Partnership (IFRP) activities, funded through Title II of the Food for Peace Act, supporting the production, packaging, and distribution of specialized prepackaged foods through small grants.

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